# Determining if a USB Flash Drive is USB 2.0

Posted At : July 16, 2008 1:00 PM | Posted By : Josh Adams
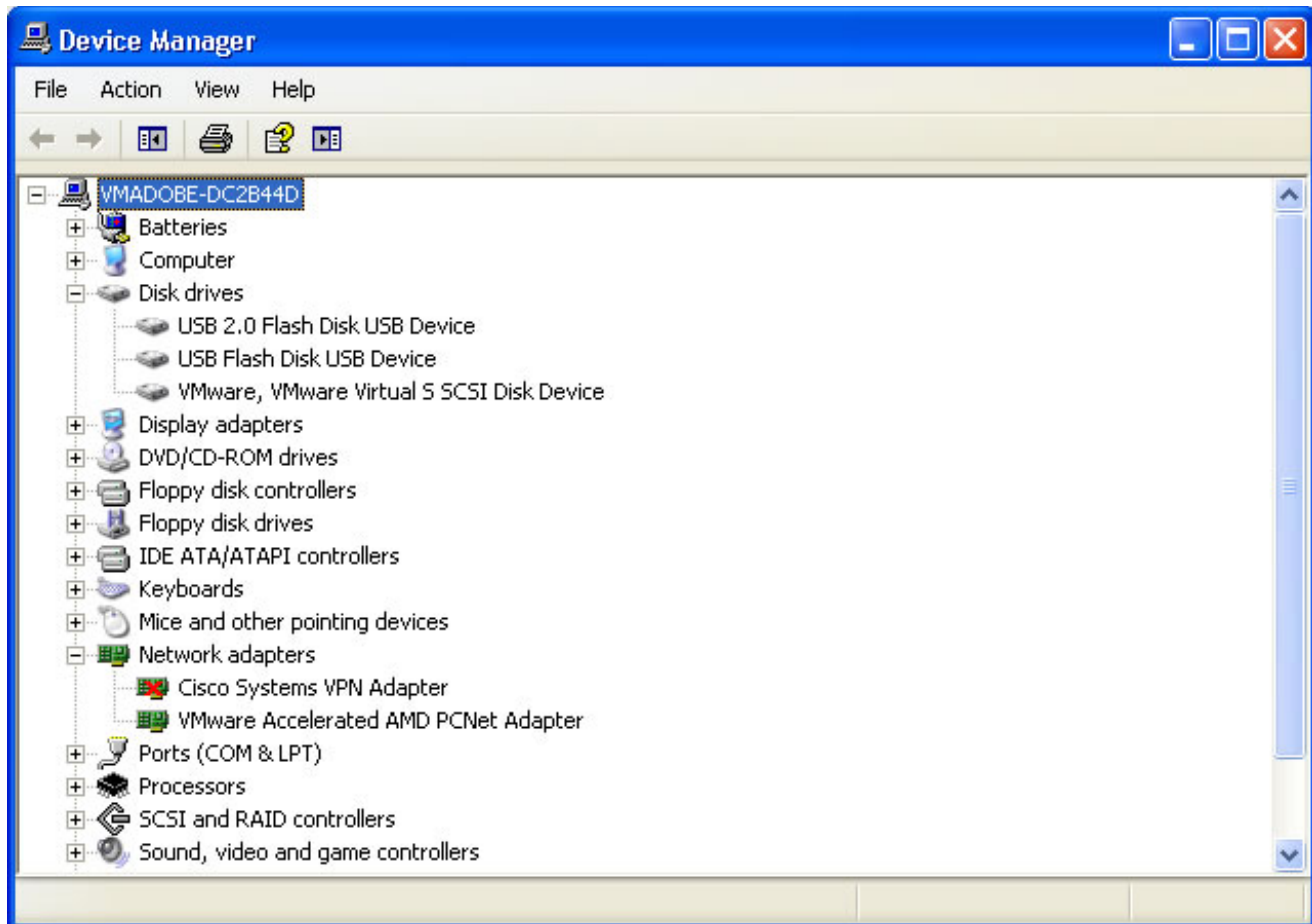Related Categories: Windows, USB

Well, I published this post for about 5 minutes, then realized it wasn't entirely accurate so I pulled it down so I could have some time to revise it. I was hoping (and frankly, thinking) no one had actually seen it--then I looked in my own blog reader and found out it had consumed my feed. Doh! Sorry to anyone else who got the feed with the original post and then couldn't even link out to the post because it was no longer live.

Yes, indeed it is true: I am posting to my blog. :)

If you're like me, you are given USB flash drives from time to time. Now, when you **buy** a USB flash drive, at least at retail here in the US, it comes in packaging that tells you if it supports USB 2.0. But when someone **gives** you a USB flash drive, it very often doesn't come with any packaging at all--and that leaves you wondering a) how big it is and b) whether or not it supports USB 2.0. Unfortunately, many of the USB flash drives that are giveaways do not supports USB 2.0 (I presume this is because USB 2.0 flash drives are more expensive to buy, and probably produce, than USB 1.1 flash drives and so giving away USB 1.1 flash drives therefore saves the givers money). But...some USB flash drives given away do support USB 2.0, so you can't just assume when you receive a flash drive that it doesn't support USB 2.0. What's it really matter, you may ask? Well, USB 2.0 is **considerably** faster than any previous USB edition. And to be brutally honest, the deal is that when someone gives you a slower USB flash drive and you're in the situation I'm in where you already have a couple of USB 2.0 flash drives, you want to know whether or not the flash drive you've been given is worth keeping or not.

So...how do you tell if a USB flash drive supports USB 2.0? I wish I knew! I've poked around on both Mac and Windows XP and I've searched extensively online and I can't find any method that will definitively provide that information. At this point, the best I have is that sometimes you can get at least an idea on Windows XP as follows:

1. Connect your flash drive to one of your PC's USB 2.0 ports. If your PC doesn't have 2.0 ports there is good news: if you connect a USB 2.0 device to a USB 1.1 port, Windows XP will often (possibly always) present you with a message that says the device can perform faster if you connect it to a USB 2.0 port. Perhaps this is in fact the best way to ascertain on Windows XP whether or not a device supports USB 2.0.
2. Open Device Manager. This can be accomplished by right-clicking My Computer on the desktop and selecting Properties to open System Properties, clicking on the Hardware tab, then clicking the Device Manager button.
3. Expand the Disk Drives item.
4. Take note of the name listed for your device: as you can see in the image below, the name may tell the tale: in the image, you'll see that one of my devices is called "USB 2.0 Flash Disk USB Device." Now, that name could be misleading; just having "USB 2.0" in the name may not guarantee that the device supports USB 2.0--but I'm thinking it's probably a pretty good guess that if "USB 2.0" is in the name then the device does indeed support USB 2.0. The problem, though, is that even if the inclusion of "USB 2.0" in a device name does definitively mean that a device supports USB 2.0, it appears that the lack of the inclusion of "USB 2.0" in a device name does not definitively mean that a device is not USB 2.0: I connected another of my USB flash drives that has USB 2.0 actually stamped on it and the description displayed was "Memorex TD Classic 003B USB Device"--nothing there about "USB 2.0." That said, I think sometimes the lack of "USB 2.0" in the name can be enlightening: in the image, you can see that there is a device called "USB Flash Disk Device;" in light of the fact that this description is so similar to the description of the other device, excepting the conspicuous absence of "2.0," I think it's safe to assume that device isn't USB 2.0--but ultimately, that's still an assumption. I later connected another of my USB flash drives and it was called "Generic Flash Disk USB Device"--I'm guessing that one too isn't USB 2.0, but again, that's only a guess.

In the end, this post isn't as helpful as I hoped it would be because I have not been able to provide a definitive methodology for determining whether or not a device supports USB 2.0. If you have insights on this subject, please take the time to post a comment.